

Climbing Wall Association

Climbing Wall Instructor Certification Standards

10/29/2010

Experience Recommendations

Prior climbing experience is important in developing the skills necessary to climb safely and teach basic climbing and belaying skills to others. We recommend, but do not require, the following experience guidelines for successful candidates:

- The candidate has one year personal climbing experience;
- The candidate has a minimum 20 outings climbing indoors and/or outdoors;
- The candidate has a combination of formal training and climbing experience of 40 hours.

These guidelines are provided by way of example. Candidates that do not have sufficient prior climbing experience may not pass the course.

Pre-requisites for Certification

1. The candidate will be at least 16 years of age by the conclusion of the course. (Note: persons less than 16 years of age may audit the course and will not receive certification, but will receive a letter of completion.)
2. The candidate can demonstrate basic climbing movement skills.
3. The candidate can climb 5.8 top rope demonstrating calm, confidence, and good position without falls.
4. The candidate can climb 5.7 lead demonstrating calm, confidence, and good position without z-clips, back clips, or falls (optional: for lead endorsement only).
5. The candidate has or is provided with appropriate equipment in good condition.
6. The candidate can demonstrate proper care, use, and inspection of climbing equipment.
7. The candidate can demonstrate proficient belay technique.

Equipment and Facility Inspection

1. The candidate possesses adequate knowledge of inspection procedures for climbing equipment, according to manufacturers' instructions, including but not limited to: harnesses, belay devices, carabiners, ropes, cordage, and slings.
2. The candidate possesses adequate knowledge of the proper set-up of the climbing wall including anchor and belay systems according to the manufacturer's instructions.
3. The candidate possesses adequate knowledge of routine pre-use and ongoing facility inspection practices.

***Note:** this does not imply that the instructor must be qualified to conduct a comprehensive structural inspection per CWA's inspection specifications.*

Client Orientation and Instruction

1. The candidate possesses adequate knowledge to conduct a patron orientation covering inherent risks of climbing, personal responsibility for risks and safety, and facility rules.
2. The candidate is aware of the existence of auto-belay devices and is capable of and willing to follow the manufacturer's instructions for use (e.g. North, Perfect Descent, TRUBLUE, Spectrum, Extreme Engineering, or similar auto belay devices).
3. The candidate has the ability to teach basic movement skills.
4. The candidate acts in a professional manner.

Top Rope Skills

1. The candidate can demonstrate the proper use of locking carabiner(s) for belay rope attachment.
2. The candidate can tie and evaluate a retraced figure eight for climber belay rope attachment.
3. The candidate can demonstrate proper set up of a belay system using a tube or plate belay device, and a mechanical-assist belay device.
4. The candidate can perform an effective top rope belay using a tube or plate belay device, and a mechanical-assist belay device demonstrating proper technique, position, control and communication.
5. The candidate has the ability to teach proper use of climbing equipment according to manufacturers' instructions: including a harness, locking carabiner, tube or plate belay device, and mechanical-assist belay device.
6. The candidate has the ability to teach tying a figure eight knot for climber belay rope attachment.
7. The candidate has the ability to teach basic rope management skills for top roped climbing.
8. The candidate has the ability to teach proper set up, belay skills, and technique for top roped climbing using a tube or plate belay device, and a mechanical-assist belay device.

Note: criteria for effective belays--all criteria must be met:

- A. proper configuration and use of the belay device according to manufacturer's instructions;
- B. ability to properly feed rope through the device;
- C. maintaining a brake hand grasped on the rope **at all times**;
- D. ability to brake **at all times**, in other words the brake strand is always under control;
- E. demonstrate an appropriate behavioral reaction to fall (i.e. the belayer must reflexively react to arrest a fall – even if stressed, surprised, fearful, etc.)

Lead Skills (optional for lead endorsement)

1. The candidate can perform an effective lead belay using a tube or plate belay device, and a mechanical-assist belay device demonstrating proper technique, position, control and communication.
2. The candidate has the ability to teach basic rope management skills for lead climbing.
3. The candidate has the ability to teach proper belay skills and technique for lead climbing using a tube or plate belay device, and a mechanical-assist belay device.
4. The candidate has the ability to teach a lead lesson including, but not limited to route-finding, clipping, and rope management.

Bouldering and Spotting

1. The candidate has the ability to present an appropriate orientation to bouldering.
2. The candidate has the ability to teach proper falling techniques.
3. The candidate has the ability to teach proper spotting techniques, both stationary and moving.
4. The candidate possesses adequate knowledge to determine when spotting may or may not be needed.
5. The candidate possesses adequate knowledge to select and use appropriate impact attenuating surfaces for bouldering.
6. The candidate can demonstrate a controlled un-rope fall while bouldering demonstrating calm and good position.

Emergency Procedures

1. The candidate has the ability to activate facility emergency procedures if and when necessary.
2. The candidate has the ability to record and report required factual information pertaining to emergencies.

Climbing Wall Instructor Course Provider Requirements:

Any person meeting the pre-requisites to become a CWI certification program provider, and who maintains appropriate membership status, may stand as a candidate for certification to be a provider and is encouraged to apply. Eligibility is determined based upon review of an application, a current *résumé* or *curriculum vitae*, references, completion of a provider course if applicable, and willingness to complete an attestation and agreement. An interview may also be required. Pre-requisites for CWI Certification program provider include:

1. Current membership in the CWA.
2. 21 years of age.
3. Current first aid and CPR (American Red Cross Basic - 5.5 to 6.5 hours, or equivalent).
4. A *résumé* or other document showing a minimum of 200 hours of work experience as a climbing instructor, showing expertise in indoor climbing settings.
5. Climbing ability: 5.9 top rope and 5.8 lead on artificial structures.
6. Current CWA Certified Climbing Wall Instructor.*
7. Two non-related professional references, including contact information and phone number.
8. A signed agreement and attestation on file.
9. Proof of insurance.

*If the candidate is not a current CWA Certified Climbing Wall Instructor, the candidate may complete an alternative qualification procedure documenting that the candidate meets the requirements of becoming a provider but showing a minimum of 400 hours of work experience as a climbing instructor. Exceptional and wide-ranging indoor climbing teaching experience, prior experience as an instructor or guide, or other certification will be considered as evidence of qualification. Completion of a provider training course may or may not be required as part of the alternative qualification procedure.